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ON YOUTH

V. I. LENIN

J. V. STALIN



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I

V. I. LENIN

ORGANISE, ORGANISE, ORGANISE!

....We need young forces. I would recommend directly shooting on the spot those who dare to say that there are no people. There are shoals of people in Russia: all that is needed is more widely and boldly, more boldly and widely, again more widely and again more boldly to recruit young people, *and not to be afraid of them*. This is wartime. The youth will decide the issue of the whole struggle, the student youth and still more the working-class youth. Get rid of all the old habits of immobility, respect for rank and so on. Form *hundreds* of circles of *Vperyod*-ites* among the youth and encourage them to work at full blast. Enlarge the committee *threefold* by taking on young people, create five or ten sub-committees, 'co-opt' any and every honest and energetic person. Empower every sub-committee to write and publish leaflets without any red tape (it will not be terrible if they make a mistake; we on the *Vperyod* will 'mildly' correct them). We must with desperate speed unite and set to work all people with initiative. Do not fear their lack of training, do not tremble at their inexperience and lack of development. Firstly, if you are unable to organise and stimulate them to action, they will turn to the Mensheviks and the Gapon[†], and this same inexperience of theirs will cause five times more damage. Secondly, events themselves will teach them *in our spirit*. Events are now teaching all and everybody precisely in the *Vperyod* spirit.

* That is to say, the circles of readers organised around *Vperyod*, the Bolshevik paper, first published on January 4, 1905, after the Mensheviks had got control of *Iskra* —Ed.

† A priest who, working for the police, had organised the workers of St. Petersburg in a society, and who on January 9, 1905, led a huge crowd of workers and their families to present a petition to the tsar at the Winter Palace. The action of the police and cossacks who murderously attacked the demonstration, precipitated the outbreak of the Revolution by destroying all belief in the possibility of peaceful methods.—Ed.

Only you must unfailingly organise, organise, and organise *hundreds* of circles, completely pushing into the background the customary, well-intentioned committee (hierarchic) stupidity.

This is wartime. Either you create *new* young, fresh energetic, warlike organisations everywhere for Social-Democratic work of all sorts and kinds, and among all strata, or you will perish, enveloped in the glory of 'committee' bureaucrats.

P.S. You must make it your duty to revolutionise the delivery of *Vperyod* to Russia. Carry on widespread propaganda for subscriptions from St. Petersburg. Let students, and especially *workers*, subscribe for scores and hundreds of copies to be sent to their own addresses. It is absurd to fear this in times like the present. The police can never intercept all of them. If a half or a third reach their destination, it will be a lot. Convey this idea to *any* youth circle, and it will find hundreds of ways of its own of getting in touch with abroad. Distribute addresses more widely for the sending of letters to *Vperyod*, as widely as possible.

From *A Letter to A. A. Bogdanov and S. I. Gussev*, February 11, 1905. (Collected Works, Vol. VII, pp. 102-3. Russian Edition.)

THE NEED FOR NEW FORCES

Many thanks for your letters. Unfailingly continue in the same spirit. Only I want to say this: (1) never confine yourself to summarising the letters or reports transmitted to you, but invariably send them to us (in addition to your own letters) *in full*; (2) make it an absolute point to put us into *direct* contact with new forces, young people, fresh circles. Do not forget that the strength of an organisation lies in the number of its contacts. We must judge the efficiency and results of the work of our friends by the number of *new* Russian contacts they pass on to us. Until now *none* of the St. Petersburg people (shame on them!) has given us a *single* Russian contact. This is scandalous, this is ruinous, this is bankruptcy! Learn from the Mensheviks, for God's sake. There are shoals of letters in *Iskra** No. 85. You have read *Vperyod*† to young people; then why have you not connected us with a single one of them? Remember, you have only to get arrested and we shall be stranded, unless you get us a *dozen*

* Beginning with No. 52, *Iskra*, the paper founded by Lenin, had passed into the control of the Mensheviks.—Ed.

† See footnote, page 1.—Ed.

new, young and faithful friends of Vperyyod who are able to work, able to maintain contacts and able to carry on a correspondence without you. Bear that in mind! A professional revolutionary should create scores of new ties everywhere, hand over all the work to them while he is still about, teach them and bring them up to the mark not by admonitions but by work. Then he should go to another place, and a month or two later return and see how his young substitutes are getting along. I assure you, there is among us a sort of idiotic, philistine, spineless fear of young people. I implore you, combat this fear with all your might.

A Letter to S. I. Gussev, February 15, 1905. (Collected Works, Vol. XXVII, pp. 454-5, Russian Edition.)

LESSONS OF THE MOSCOW EVENTS

The growth of the revolutionary spirit among the Moscow proletariat, which was so vividly expressed in the political strike and in the street fighting, has not yet subsided. The strike continues. It has partly spread to St. Petersburg, where the compositors are striking in sympathy with their Moscow comrades. It is still uncertain whether the present movement will die down until the next rising tide or whether it will assume protracted forms. But certain results of the Moscow events, and very instructive ones at that, are already apparent, and it would be worth while to dwell on them.

On the whole, the movement in Moscow did not attain the pitch of a decisive battle between the revolutionary workers and the tsarist forces. It consisted only of small skirmishes on the outposts, a part, perhaps, of a military demonstration in the civil war, but it was not one of those engagements which determine the issue of a war. Of the two suppositions we advanced a week ago, it is apparently the first that is being justified, namely, that what we are witnessing is not the beginning of the decisive onslaught, but only its rehearsal. But the rehearsal has, nevertheless, given a full length portrait of all the dramatis personae of the historical drama, thus casting a vivid light on the probable—and in part even inevitable—course of the drama itself.

The motif of the Moscow events was in the nature of incidents which at a first glance appear to be of a purely academic character. The government conferred partial 'autonomy,' or so-called autonomy, on the universities. Messrs. the Professors were granted self-government. The students were granted the right of assembly. Thus a small breach was forced in the general system of autocratic-feudal oppression. And

immediately new revolutionary currents swept into this breach with unexpected force. A miserable concession, a paltry reform, granted with the object of blunting the edge of the political antagonism and of 'reconciling' robbers and robbed, in fact served tremendously to accentuate the struggle and to enlarge the number of its participants. Workers flocked to the students' assemblies. The latter began to assume the character of popular revolutionary meetings at which the foremost class in the struggle for liberty—the proletariat—predominated. The government was outraged. The 'respectable' liberals, having received professional self-government, wavered and oscillated between the revolutionary students and the government of police rule and the knout. The liberals took advantage of liberty in order to betray liberty, in order to restrain the students from extending and accentuating the struggle and in order to appeal for 'order'—in the face of the Bashi-bazouks and Black Hundreds, the Trepovs and Romanovs! The liberals took advantage of self-government in order to do the work of hangmen of the people, in order to close the university, that only sanctuary of 'science' permitted by the knout-wielders, which the students defiled by allowing the 'vile mob' to enter it for the discussion of questions 'not permitted' by the autocratic gang. The self-governing liberals sold the people and betrayed liberty, because they feared carnage in the university. And exemplary punishment was meted out to them for their vile cowardice. By closing the revolutionary university they opened the way to a street revolution. Wretched pedants that they are, they were already preparing to jubilate in concert with rascals like Glazov over the fact that they had managed to extinguish the conflagration in the school. But as a matter of fact they only started a conflagration in a huge industrial city. These clowns on stilts forbade the workers to forgather with the students, but they only drove the students to the revolutionary workers. They judged all political questions from the standpoint of their own chicken-coop, which was thoroughly permeated by the spirit of ancient officialdom. They implored the students to spare this chicken-coop. At the first fresh breeze—the manifestation of the free and youthful revolutionary element—everybody forgot about their chicken-coop, for the breeze freshened and grew into a storm directed against the prime source of all officialdom and all the humiliations of the Russian people—the tsarist autocracy. And even now, when the first danger has passed and the storm has clearly subsided, the lackeys of the autocracy still shiver with fear at the mere recollection of the gulf that yawned before them in the Bloody Moscow days. 'It is still not a conflagration, but that it is arson is already beyond

question,' mutters Mr. Menshikov in the servile *Novoye Vremya* (of September 30). 'It is still not a revolution...but it is already the prologue to a revolution.' 'It is on the move,' [Mr. Menshikov] argued in April. And what frightful strides "it" has since made!...The popular element has been stirred to its very depths....'

Yes, the Trepovs and Romanovs, and the treacherous liberal bourgeois with them, have become gripped in a fine vice. Open the universities—and you provide a platform for popular revolutionary meetings, you perform an invaluable service to the Social-Democrats. Shut the universities—and you open the way for a street struggle. And so our knights of the knout toss hither and thither and gnash their teeth: they again open the Moscow University; they pretend that they want to allow the students to maintain order themselves during street processions; they shut their eyes to the revolutionary self-government of the students, who are formulating their division among the Social-Democratic Party, the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, etc., and thus bringing about proper political representation in the student 'parliament' (and who, we are confident, will not confine themselves to revolutionary self-government, but will immediately and earnestly set about organising and arming detachments of the revolutionary army). And, like Trepov, the liberal professors are tossing hither and thither, hastening one day to persuade the students to be more moderate, and the next day to persuade the knout-wielders to be more lenient. The tossings of both cause us the greatest satisfaction: it means that the revolutionary breeze must be blowing finely if the political commanders and the political turncoats are leaping in such a lively manner on the upper deck....

From an Article published in October 1905. (Collected Works, Vol. VIII, pp. 311-13, Russian Edition.)

THE STUDENT MOVEMENT AND THE PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION

A students' strike has been declared in the St. Petersburg University. It has been joined by a number of other higher educational establishments. The movement has already spread to Moscow and Kharkov. Judging by all the accounts in foreign and Russian newspapers and in private letters from Russia, we are confronted with a fairly widespread *academical* movement.

Back to the old times! Back to pre-revolutionary Russia! Such is the call to which these events above all testify. The government reactionaries are trying, as always, to pull the

universities into line. The struggle against the student organisations, an eternal feature of autocratic Russia, has assumed the form of a campaign by Schwartz, the Black Hundred Minister—acting with the full consent of Stolypin,* the ‘Premier’—against the autonomy which was promised to the students in the autumn of 1905 (what did the autocracy not ‘promise’ the Russian citizens then under the pressure of the revolutionary working class!), against the autonomy which the students enjoyed as long as the autocracy ‘had its hands full without the students,’ and which the autocracy, being an autocracy, was bound to try to withdraw.

The liberal press mourns and whines as always, but this time together with some of the Octobrists. The professorial gentry are also mourning and whining: they implore the government not to adopt the path of reaction and to take advantage of this splendid opportunity ‘to ensure peace and order by reforms’ in ‘a country exhausted by upheavals’; they implore the students not to resort to illegal methods, which can only play into the hands of the reactionaries, etc., etc. How antiquated and hackneyed all these arguments are, and how vividly they recall the situation of some twenty years ago, at the end of the ‘eighties! The similarity between those times and the present is particularly striking if we consider the present moment by itself, separated from the vicissitudes of three years of revolution. For the Duma† (at a first glance) expresses, only in a slightly different way, exactly the same pre-revolutionary alignment of forces: the rule of the barbaric landlord, who prefers to have connections at court and to exercise his influence through his brother, the official, rather than have any kind of representative government; the support that this same official enjoys among the merchants (Octobrists), who do not dare to part ways with the benefacting fathers; the ‘opposition’ of the bourgeois intelligentsia, whose greatest concern is to demonstrate their loyalty and who regard exhortations to the powers as the political activity of liberalism. The workers’ deputies in the Duma are an all too feeble reminder of the part the proletariat recently played by its open mass struggle.

One asks, can we, under such circumstances, attribute any importance to the old, primitive forms of academical struggle of the students? If the liberals have sunk to the ‘policy’ (one can, of course, call this a policy only in derision)

* For an account of the reactionary measures carried out under Stolypin see History of the C. P. S. U. (B), Chapter IV, § 3.

† For the attitude of the Bolsheviks to the Duma the reader should consult History of the C. P. S. U. (B), Chapter III, § 5.

of the 'eighties, would not the Social-Democrats be lowering their tasks if they were to consider it necessary to support the academical struggle in one way or another?

Apparently, this question is being asked by Social-Democratic students here and there. At any rate, a letter was received by the editorial board of our paper from a group of Social-Democratic students which, incidentally, states:

'On September 13, an assembly of students of the St. Petersburg University decided to call for an all-Russian students' strike, justifying the call on the grounds of Schwartz's aggressive tactics. The platform of the strike is academical; the assembly even welcomed the "first steps" of the Moscow and St. Petersburg professorial councils in the fight for autonomy. We are perplexed by the academical platform advanced by the St. Petersburg assembly; we consider it inadmissible under present conditions and one which cannot unite the students for an active and broad struggle. We can conceive student action only in co-ordination with general political action and in no case by itself. The elements that could unite the students do not exist. In view of this we are against academical action.'

The mistake made by the authors of the letter is of far greater political significance than might have been thought at a first glance, for the authors' arguments in fact touch on a subject which is incomparably more wide and important than the question of participating in the present strike.

'We can conceive student action only in co-ordination with general political action. In view of this we are against academical action.'

This argument is fundamentally wrong. A revolutionary slogan, namely, that we must strive for the co-ordinated political action of the students and the proletariat, etc., is here transformed from a living guiding principle for wider, more comprehensive and militant agitation into a lifeless dogma which is mechanically applied to the various stages of various forms of the movement. It is not enough to proclaim co-ordinated political action in repetition of the 'last word' of the lessons of the revolution. One must know how to agitate for political action, utilising for this agitation every opportunity, every circumstance and, first and foremost, every mass conflict between any of the advanced elements and the autocracy. The point is not, of course, that we should necessarily in advance divide every students' movement into 'stages' and absolutely see to it that every stage is punctiliously observed from fear of 'untimely' transitions to politics and so forth. Such a

view would be the most harmful pedantry and would only conduce to an opportunist policy. But equally harmful is the reverse mistake of refusing to take account of the actual situation and conditions of the given mass movement for the sake of a slogan wrongly understood in an immobile sense. Such an application of the slogan inevitably degenerates into revolutionary phrase-mongering.

Conditions are possible in which the academical movement may lower the level of the political movement, or disintegrate it, or distract attention from it and in such a case, of course, it would be the duty of the Social-Democratic student groups to concentrate their agitation against such a movement. But everybody can see that the objective political conditions at the present moment are different: the academical movement signifies the *beginning* of the movement of a new 'shift' of students who are already more or less accustomed to a narrow autonomy, and this movement, moreover, is beginning just now, at a time when other forms of mass struggle do not exist, at a time of a lull, during which the broad masses still continue silently, intently and slowly to *digest* the experience of three years of revolution.

Under such circumstances the Social-Democrats would be committing a profound mistake if they declared that they were 'against academical action.' No, the student groups belonging to our party must devote every effort to supporting, utilising and expanding the present movement. Like all support given by Social-Democrats to primitive forms of the movement, support in this case must consist chiefly and primarily in ideologically and organisationally influencing the broader strata which have been aroused by the conflict and for which this form of conflict is in many cases their *first* political conflict. For the students who entered the universities during the past two years were almost entirely secluded from politics and were trained in a spirit of narrow academical autonomy, trained not only by official professors and the government press, but also by liberal professors and by the whole Cadet Party.* For young people like this a broad strike (if they are only capable of creating a broad strike! We must do everything to assist them to do so, but of course we as Socialists cannot guarantee the success of any bourgeois movement) is the beginning of political conflict, whether the combatants realise it or not. It is our duty to explain to the mass of 'academical' protesters the objective significance of this conflict, to try to make it a *conscious* political one, to

* This was the nickname given to the Constitutional Democratic Party, the Party of the Liberal bourgeoisie.—Ed.

intensify tenfold the agitational activities of the Social-Democratic student groups, and to *direct all this activity in such a way that the revolutionary lessons to be drawn from the history of these three years shall be assimilated, that the inevitability of a new revolutionary struggle shall be understood, and that our old slogans—which have remained quite up to date—calling for the overthrow of the autocracy and the summoning of a Constituent Assembly shall again become a subject of discussion and a focus for the political concentration of the new generations of the democracy.*

The Social-Democratic students have no right to reject such work under any circumstances—and however difficult such work may be at the present moment, and whatever mis-haps may befall some or other agitators in some or other university, fraternity, meeting, etc., we say: knock, and it shall be opened unto you! Political agitation is never wasted. Its success is not measured by whether we succeed at once right off the bat in winning a majority or in gaining consent to co-ordinated political action. It is possible that we may not secure this at once. But just because we are an organised proletarian party we should not be disturbed by temporary failures, but should rather carry on *our work* persistently, unswervingly and consistently even under the most difficult conditions.

The appeal of the St. Petersburg Coalition Students' Council which we print below shows that even the most active elements among the students stubbornly adhere to pure academism and are still singing the Cadet-Octoberist song. And this at a time when the Cadet-Octoberist press is displaying the most despicable attitude towards the strike, arguing at the very height of the struggle that it is harmful, criminal, etc. We cannot but welcome the rebuff which the St. Petersburg Committee of our Party considered it necessary to give the Coalition Council (see the column 'Party Life').

Apparently, Schwartz's whips are still not enough to convert the present-day students from 'academics' into 'politicians'; they need the scorpions of new Black Hundred drill sergeants for the complete revolutionary education of the new forces. And to train these forces, who are being educated by Stolypin's policy and by every step of the counter-revolutionaries, we too must work indefatigably, we, the Social-Democrats, who clearly see the objective inevitability of new bourgeois-democratic conflicts, on a nation-wide scale, with the autocracy, which has joined forces with the Black Hundred and Octoberist Duma.

Yes, on a nation-wide scale, for the Black Hundred counter-revolution, which is turning Russia back in its course, is not

only steeling new fighters in the ranks of the revolutionary proletariat, but will inevitably evoke a new movement among the non-proletarian, i.e., bourgeois democracy (meaning by this, of course, not the participation of the *whole opposition* in the struggle, but the wide participation of the elements of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie that are really democratic, i.e., those capable of fighting). The beginning of the mass student struggle in Russia in 1908 is a political symptom, a symptom of the whole present situation created by the counter-revolution. Thousands and millions of threads bind the student youth to the middle and lower bourgeoisie, to the small officials, to certain groups of peasants, clergy, etc. If, in the spring of 1908, attempts were made to revive the 'League of Emancipation,' somewhat more Left than the old Cadet, semi-landlord League represented by Peter Struve,* if in the autumn ferment is beginning among the mass of the youth which stands closest to the democratic bourgeoisie in Russia, if the venal hacks have with redoubled fury again raised a howl about revolution in the schools, if the vile liberal professors and Cadet leaders are moaning and wailing over the untimely, dangerous and disastrous strikes, strikes that are abhorrent to the dear Octobrists and capable of 'repelling' the Octobrists, the ruling Octobrists—it means that new powder is accumulating in the powder magazines! It means that it is *not only* among the students that a reaction against reaction is beginning.

And however feeble and embryonic this beginning may be, the party of the working class must and will utilise it. We were able to work for years and decades before the revolution, advancing our revolutionary slogans first among the circles, then among the masses of the workers, then in the street and then at the barricades. And *now too* we must be able to create what above all is the task of the day, without which talk about co-ordinated political action will be empty phrasemongering, namely, a strong proletarian organisation, everywhere carrying on *political agitation* among the masses on behalf of its revolutionary slogans. And our university groups too must set about creating such an organisation in their student field, must set about conducting such agitation based on the present movement.

The proletariat will not be behindhand. It frequently

* One of the leaders of the 'legal Marxists', who under the guise of Marxism sought to adapt the working class movement to the interests of the bourgeoisie. Though calling themselves Marxists they cut out the core of Marxism, the doctrine of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.—Ed.

yields first place to the bourgeois democrats in the making of speeches at banquets, within lawful unions, within the walls of universities and from the rostrums of representative institutions. It never yields and never will yield first place to anybody in the great and earnest revolutionary struggle of the masses. The conditions for the outbreak of this struggle do not ripen as rapidly and as easily as some of us might wish—but these conditions are ripening and will most certainly reach maturity. And the small beginning of the small academic conflicts is a big beginning, for it will be followed by big sequels—if not to-day, then to-morrow, or the day after to-morrow.

Published in October 1908. (*Collected Works, XII, pp. 336-41. Russian Edition.*)

THE YOUTH INTERNATIONAL

UNDER the above title, the 'Militant and Propaganda Organ of the International League of Socialist Youth Organisations' has been appearing in Switzerland in the German language since September 1, 1915. Altogether, six issues have appeared. This publication is worthy of general notice and should be strongly recommended to the attention of all members of our Party who are able to come into contact with foreign Social-Democratic parties and youth organisations.

The majority of the official Social-Democratic Parties of Europe are now advocating the lowest and vilest form of social chauvinism and opportunism. This applies to the German Party, the French Party, the Fabian Society and 'Labour' Party in England, the Swedish Party, the Dutch (Troelstra's) Party, the Danish Party, the Austrian Party, etc. In the Swiss Party, notwithstanding the secession (to the great benefit of the Labour movement) of the extreme opportunists to form the non-Party 'Grutli League,' there are still within the Social-Democratic Party itself numerous opportunist, social-chauvinist and Kautskyian leaders who exercise enormous influence on the affairs of the Party.

In the circumstances thus prevailing in Europe, on the League of Socialist Youth Organisations falls the tremendous,

* In order to understand the deterioration of Kautsky from the role of Marxist theoretician to that of open supporter of his own imperialist government, and for an analysis of 'opportunism' and 'social-chauvinism', the reader should consult, *The Proletarian, Revolution and Renegade Kautsky* and *The War and Second International*.

thankful—but difficult—task of fighting for revolutionary internationalism and for true socialism against the prevailing opportunism, which has deserted to the side of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

The *Youth International* has published a number of good articles in defence of revolutionary internationalism, and the whole publication is permeated with a fine spirit of intense hatred for the betrayers of Socialism who 'defend the fatherland' in the present war, and with the most earnest desire to purge the international labour movement of the corroding influence of chauvinism and opportunism.

Of course, the organ of the youth is still not distinguished by theoretical clarity and firmness, and perhaps never will be, precisely because it is the organ of the seething, turbulent and inquiring youth. However, our attitude towards the inadequate theoretical clarity of such people must be entirely different from what it is—and should be—towards the theoretical hodge-podge in the heads, and the absence of revolutionary consistency in the hearts of our 'O.C.-ists,' 'Socialist Revolutionaries,' Tolstoyans, anarchists, all-European Kautskyists (the 'Centre') and the like. Adults who pretend to lead and teach others, but who mislead the proletariat are one thing; against such people a *ruthless* struggle must be waged. Youth organisations which openly declare that they are still learning, that their main task is to train workers for the Socialist parties, are quite another thing. Such people must be assisted in every way; we must be as patient as possible with their mistakes and strive to correct them gradually, mainly by *persuasion*, and not by fighting them. Members of the middle-aged and older generations frequently *do not know* how to tackle the youth in the proper way, for the youth must necessarily approach Socialism differently, not in the same way, *not in the same form, not under the same circumstances* as their fathers. This, incidentally, is why we must be decidedly in favour of the *organisational independence* of the Youth League, *and not only* because the opportunists fear this independence, but because of the very nature of the case; for unless they have complete independence the youth *will be unable* either to train themselves to be good Socialists, or to prepare themselves to *further* Socialism.

Complete independence for the Youth Leagues, but also complete freedom for comradely criticism of their errors! We must not flatter the youth.

Extract from a Review published in December 1916.
(*Selected Works*, Vol. V, pp. 241-43. *English Edition*.)

THE TASKS OF THE YOUTH LEAGUES

COMRADES, I would like to-day to discuss the fundamental tasks of the Young Communist League and, in this connection what the youth organisations in a Socialist republic should be like in general.

It is all the more necessary to deal with this question because in a certain sense it may be said that it is precisely the youth that will be faced with the real task of creating a Communist society. For it is clear that the generation of workers that was brought up in capitalist society can, at best, accomplish the task of destroying the foundations of the old, capitalist social life, which was based on exploitation. At best it can accomplish the task of creating a social system that would help the proletariat and the toiling classes to retain power and to lay a firm foundation, on which can build only the generation that is starting to work under the new conditions, conditions in which exploiting relations between men no longer exist.

And so, in approaching the tasks of the youth from this angle, I must say that the tasks of the youth in general, and of the Young Communist League and all other organisations in particular, may be summed up in one word: learn.

Of course, this is only 'one word'. It does not answer the important and most essential questions: what to learn, and how to learn? And the whole point here is that with the transformation of the old capitalist society, the teaching, training and education of the new generations that will create the Communist society cannot be conducted on the old lines. The teaching, training and education of the youth must proceed from the material that was bequeathed to us by the old society.

We can build Communism only from the sum of knowledge, organisations and institutions, only with the stock of human forces and means that were bequeathed to us by the old society. Only by radically remoulding the teaching, organisation and training of the youth shall we be able to ensure that the result of the efforts of the younger generation will be the creation of a society that will be unlike the old society, i.e., a Communist society.

That is why we must deal in detail with the question of what we should teach the youth and how the youth should learn if it really wants to justify the name of Communist youth, and how it should be trained so as to be able to complete and perfect what we have started.

I must say that the first and most natural reply would seem to be that the Youth League, and the youth that wants to pass to Communism as a whole, should learn Communism.

But this reply—'learn Communism'—is too general. What do we need in order to learn Communism? What must be singled out from the sum of general knowledge to acquire a knowledge of Communism? Here a number of dangers arise, which often confront us when the task of learning Communism is presented incorrectly, or when it is interpreted too one-sidedly.

Naturally, the first thought that enters one's mind is that learning Communism means imbibing the sum of knowledge that is contained in Communist textbooks, pamphlets and books. But such a definition of the study of Communism would be too crude and inadequate.

If the study of Communism consisted solely in imbibing what is contained in Communist books and pamphlets, we might all too easily obtain Communist text-jugglers or braggarts, and this would very often cause us harm and damage, because such people, having learned by rote what is contained in Communist books and pamphlets, would be incapable of combining this knowledge, and would be unable to act in the way Communism really demands.

One of the greatest evils and misfortunes bequeathed to us by the old capitalist society is the complete divorcement of books from practical life; for we have had books in which everything was described in the best possible manner, yet these books in the majority of cases were most disgusting and hypocritical lies that described Communist society falsely. That is why the mere routine absorption of what is written in books about Communism would be extremely wrong. In our speeches and articles we do not now merely repeat what was formerly said about Communism, because our speeches and articles are connected with daily, all-round work. Without work, without struggle, a routine knowledge of Communism obtained from Communist pamphlets and books would be worthless, for it would continue the old divorcement of theory from practice, that old divorcement which constituted the most disgusting feature of the old bourgeois society.

It would be still more dangerous to start to imbibe only Communist slogans. If we did not realise this danger in time, and if we did not direct all our efforts to avert this danger, the half million or million boys and girls who called themselves Communists after studying Communism in this way would only occasion great damage to the cause of Communism.

Here the question arises: how should we combine all this for the study of Communism? What must we take from the old school, from the old science?

The old school declared that its aim was to create men with an all-round education, to teach the sciences in general.

We know that this was utterly false, for the whole of society was based and maintained on the division of men into classes, into exploiters and oppressed. Naturally, the old school, being thoroughly imbued with the class spirit, imparted knowledge only to the children of the bourgeoisie. Every word was falsified in the interests of the bourgeoisie.

In these schools the younger generation of workers and peasants were not so much educated as drilled in the interests of this bourgeoisie. They were trained to be useful servants of the bourgeoisie, able to create profits for it without disturbing its peace and leisure. That is why, while rejecting the old school, we have made it our task to take from it only what we require for real Communist education.

This brings me to the reproaches and accusations which we constantly hear levelled at the old school, and which often lead to totally wrong conclusions.

It is said that the old school was a school of cramming, grinding, learning by rote. That is true; nevertheless, we must distinguish between what was bad in the old school, and what is useful for us, and we must be able to choose from it what is necessary for Communism.

The old school was a school of cramming; it compelled pupils to imbibe a mass of useless, superfluous, barren knowledge, which clogged the brain and transformed the younger generation into officials turned out to pattern. But you would be committing a great mistake if you attempted to draw the conclusion that one can become a Communist without acquiring what human knowledge has accumulated. It would be a mistake to think that it is enough to learn Communist slogans, the conclusions of Communist science, without acquiring the sum of knowledge of which Communism itself is a consequence.

Marxism is an example of how Communism arose out of the sum of human knowledge.

You have read and heard that Communist theory, the science of Communism, mainly created by Marx, that this doctrine of Marxism has ceased to be the product of a single Socialist of the nineteenth century, even though he was a genius, and that it has become the doctrine of millions and tens of millions of proletarians all over the world, who are applying this doctrine in their struggle against capitalism.

And if you were to ask why the doctrines of Marx were able to capture the hearts of millions and tens of millions of the most revolutionary class, you would receive only one answer: it was because Marx took his stand on the firm foundation of the human knowledge acquired under capitalism. Having studied the laws of development of human society,

Marx realised that the development of capitalism was inevitably leading to Communism. And the principal thing is that he proved this only on the basis of the most exact, most detailed and most profound study of this capitalist society; and this he was able to do because he had fully assimilated all that earlier science had taught.

He critically reshaped everything that had been created by human society, not ignoring a single point. He reshaped everything that had been created by human thought, criticised it, tested it on the working-class movement, and drew conclusions which people restricted by bourgeois limits or bound by bourgeois prejudices could not draw.

This is what we must bear in mind when, for example, we talk about proletarian culture. Unless we clearly understand that only by an exact knowledge of the culture created by the whole development of mankind and that only by reshaping this culture can a proletarian culture be built, we shall not be able to solve this problem.

Proletarian culture is not something that has sprung nobody knows whence, it is not an invention of those who call themselves experts in proletarian culture. That is all nonsense. Proletarian culture must be the result of a natural development of the stores of knowledge which mankind has accumulated under the yoke of capitalist society, landlord society and bureaucratic society.

All these roads and paths have led, are leading, and continue to lead to proletarian culture, in the same way as political economy, reshaped by Marx, showed us what human society must come to, showed us the transition to the class struggle, to the beginning of the proletarian revolution.

When we so often hear representatives of the youth and certain advocates of a new system of education attacking the old school and saying that it was a school of cramming, we say to them that we must take what was good from the old school.

We must not take from the old school the system of loading young people's minds with an immense amount of knowledge, nine-tenths of which was useless and one-tenth distorted. But this does not mean that we can confine ourselves to Communist conclusions and learn only Communist slogans. You will not create Communism that way. You can become a Communist only by enriching your mind with the knowledge of all the treasures created by mankind.

We do not need cramming; but we do need to develop and perfect the mind of every student by a knowledge of the principal facts. For Communism would become a void, a mere signboard, and a Communist would become a mere

braggart, if all the knowledge he has obtained were not digested in his mind. You must not only assimilate this knowledge, you must assimilate it critically, so as not to cram your mind with useless lumber, but enrich it with all those facts that are indispensable to the modern man of education.

If a Communist took it into his head to boast about his Communism because of the ready-made conclusions he had acquired, without putting in a great deal of serious and hard work, without understanding the facts which he must examine critically, he would be a very deplorable Communist. Such superficiality would be decidedly fatal. If I know that I know little, I shall strive to learn more; but if a man says that he is a Communist and that he need know nothing thoroughly, he will never be anything like a Communist.

The old school turned out servants needed by the capitalists; the old school transformed men of science into men who had to write and say what pleased the capitalists. Therefore we must abolish it. But does the fact that we must abolish it, destroy it, mean that we must not take from it all that mankind has accumulated for the benefit of man?

Does it mean that it is not our duty to distinguish between what was necessary for capitalism and what is necessary for Communism?

We are replacing the old drill-sergeant methods that were employed in bourgeois society in opposition to the will of the majority by the class-conscious discipline of the workers and peasants, who combine hatred of the old society with the determination, ability and readiness to unite and organise their forces for this fight, in order to transform the wills of millions and hundreds of millions of people, disunited, dispersed and scattered over the territory of a huge country, into a single will; for without this single will we shall inevitably be defeated. Without this solidarity, without this conscious discipline of the workers and peasants, our cause will be hopeless. Without this we shall be unable to beat the capitalists and landlords of the whole world. We shall not even consolidate the foundation, let alone build a new Communist society on this foundation.

Similarly, while rejecting the old school, while cherishing a legitimate and essential hatred for the old school, while prizing the readiness to destroy the old school, we must realise that in place of the old system of tuition, in place of the old cramming system, the old drill system, we must put the ability to take the sum of human knowledge, and to take it in such a way that Communism shall not be something learned by rote, but something that you yourselves have thought over,

that it shall consist of the conclusions which are inevitable from the standpoint of modern education.

That is the way we must present the main tasks when speaking of the task of learning Communism.

In order to explain this to you, and as an approach to the question of how to learn, I shall take a practical example. You all know that following after the military tasks, the tasks connected with the defence of the republic, we are now being confronted with economic tasks.

We know that Communist society cannot be built up unless we regenerate industry and agriculture, and these must not be regenerated in the old way. They must be regenerated on a modern basis, in accordance with the last word in science. You know that this basis is electricity, and that only when the whole country, all branches of industry and agriculture have been electrified, only when you have mastered this task will you be able to build up for yourselves the Communist society which the older generation cannot build up.

We are confronted with the task of economically regenerating the whole country, of reorganising and restoring both agriculture and industry on a modern technical basis which rests on modern science and technology, on electricity.

You realise perfectly well that illiterate people cannot tackle electrification, and even mere literacy is not enough. It is not enough to understand what electricity is: it is necessary to know how to apply it technically to industry and to agriculture, and to the various branches of industry and agriculture. We must learn this ourselves, and must teach it to the whole of the younger generation of toilers.

This is the task that confronts every class-conscious Communist, every young person who regards himself as a Communist and who clearly understands that by joining the Young Communist League he has pledged himself to help the Party to build Communism and to help the whole younger generation to create a Communist society. He must realise that he can create it only on the basis of modern education; and if he does not acquire this education Communism will remain a pious wish.

The task of the old generation was to overthrow the bourgeoisie. The main task in their day was to criticise the bourgeoisie, to arouse hatred of the bourgeoisie among the masses, to develop class-consciousness and the ability to unite their forces.

The new generation is confronted with a much more complicated task. Not only have you to combine all your forces to uphold the power of the workers and peasants against the attacks of the capitalists. That you must do. That you

have clearly understood and it is distinctly perceived by every Communist. But it is not enough.

You must build up a Communist society. In many respects the first half of the work has been done. The old order has been destroyed, as it deserved to be, it has been transformed into a heap of ruins, as it deserved to be. The ground has been cleared, and on this ground the young Communist generation must build a Communist society.

You are faced with the task of construction, and you can cope with it only by mastering all modern knowledge, only if you are able to transform Communism from ready-made, memorised formulas, counsels, recipes, prescriptions and programs into that living thing which unites your immediate work, and only if you are able to transform Communism into a guide for your practical work.

This is the task by which you should be guided in educating, training and rousing the whole of the younger generation. You must be the foremost among the millions of builders of Communist society, which every young man and young woman should be.

Unless you enlist the whole mass of young workers and peasants in the work of building Communism, you will not build a Communist society.

This naturally brings me to the question how we should teach Communism and what the specific features of our methods should be.

Here, first of all, I will deal with the question of Communist ethics.

You must train yourselves to be Communists. The task of the Youth League is to organise its practical activities in such a way that, by learning, organising, uniting and fighting, its members should train themselves and all who look to it as a leader, it should train Communists. The whole object of training, educating and teaching the youth of to-day should be to imbue them with Communist ethics.

But is there such a thing as Communist ethics? Is there such a thing as Communist morality? Of course there is. It is often made to appear that we have no ethics of our own; and very often the bourgeoisie accuse us Communists of repudiating all ethics. This is a method of shuffling concepts, of throwing dust in the eyes of the workers and peasants.

In what sense do we repudiate ethics and morality?

In the sense that it is preached by the bourgeoisie, who derived ethics from God's commandments. We, of course, say that we do not believe in God, and that we know perfectly well that the clergy, the landlords and the bourgeoisie spoke in the name of God in pursuit of their own interests "as

exploiters. Or instead of deriving ethics from the commandments of morality, from the commandments of God, they derived them from idealist or semi-idealist phrases, which always amounted to something very similar to God's commandments.

We repudiate all morality derived from non-human and non-class concepts. We say that it is a deception, a fraud, a befogging of the minds of the workers and peasants in the interests of the landlords and capitalists.

We say that our morality is entirely subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. Our morality is derived from the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat.

The old society was based on the oppression of the workers and peasants by the landlords and capitalists. We had to destroy this, we had to overthrow them; but for this we had to create unity. God will not create such unity.

This unity could be created only by factories and workshops, only by the proletariat, trained and roused from its long slumber. Only when that class was formed did the mass movement begin which led to what we see now—the victory of the proletarian revolution in one of the weakest of countries, which for three years has been resisting the onslaught of the bourgeoisie of the whole world.

And we see that the proletarian revolution is growing all over the world. We now say, on the basis of experience, that only the proletariat could have created that compact force, which the disunited and scattered peasantry are following and which has withstood all the onslaughts of the exploiters. Only this class can help the toiling masses to unite, rally their ranks and definitely defend, definitely consolidate and definitely build up Communist society.

That is why we say that for us there is no such thing as morality apart from human society: it is a fraud. Morality for us is subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat.

What does this class struggle mean? It means overthrowing the tsar, overthrowing the capitalists, abolishing the capitalist class.

And what are classes in general? Classes are what permits one section of society to appropriate the labour of the other section.

If one section of society appropriates all the land, we have a landlord class and a peasant class. If one section of society possesses the mills and factories, shares and capital, while another section works in these factories, we have a capitalist class and a proletarian class.

It was not difficult to drive out the tsar—that required only a few days. It was not very difficult to drive out the landlords—that was done in a few months. Nor was it very difficult to drive out the capitalists.

But it is incomparably more difficult to abolish classes; we still have the division into workers and peasants. If the peasant is settled on his separate plot of land and appropriates superfluous grain, that is, grain that he does not need for himself or for his cattle, while the rest of the people have to go without bread, then the peasant becomes an exploiter. The more grain he clings to the more profitable he finds it; as for the rest, let them starve. He says to himself: 'The more they starve the dearer I can sell this grain.'

Everybody must work according to a common plan, on common land, in common mills and factories and under common management. Is it easy to bring this about? You see that it is not as easy as driving out the tsar, the landlords and the capitalists. In order to achieve this the proletariat must re-educate, re-train a section of the peasantry; it must win over to its side those who are toiling peasants, in order to crush the resistance of those peasants who are rich and are profiting by the poverty and want of the rest.

Hence the task of the proletarian struggle is not completed by the fact that we have overthrown the tsar and have driven out the landlords and capitalists; and its completion is the task of the system we call the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The class struggle is still continuing; it has merely changed its forms. It is the class struggle of the proletariat to prevent the return of the old exploiters, to unite the scattered masses of unenlightened peasants into one union. The class struggle is continuing and it is our task to subordinate all interests to this struggle.

And we subordinate our Communist morality to this task. We say: morality is what serves to destroy the old exploiting society and to unite all the toilers around the proletariat, which is creating a new Communist society.

Communist morality is the morality which serves this struggle, which unites the toilers against all exploitation, against all small property; for small property puts into the hands of one person what has been created by the labour of the whole of society.

The land in our country is common property.

But suppose I take a piece of this common property and grow on it twice as much grain as I need and profiteer in the surplus? Suppose I argue that the more starving people there are the more they will pay? Would I then be behaving like a Communist?

No, I would be behaving like an exploiter, like a proprietor. This must be combated.

If this is allowed to go on we shall slide back to the rule of the capitalists, to the rule of the bourgeoisie, as has more than once happened in previous revolutions. And in order to prevent the restoration of the rule of the capitalists and the bourgeoisie we must not allow profiteering, we must not allow individuals to enrich themselves at the expense of the rest, and all the toilers must unite with the proletariat and form a Communist society.

This is the principal feature of the fundamental task of the League and of the organisations of the Communist youth.

The old society was based on the principle: rob or be robbed, work for others or make others work for you, be a slave-owner or a slave. Naturally, people brought up in such a society imbibe with their mother's milk, so to speak, the psychology, the habit, the concept: you are either a slave-owner or a slave, or else a small owner, a small employee, a small official, an intellectual—in short, a man who thinks only of himself, and doesn't give a hang for anybody else.

If I work this plot of land, I don't give a hang for anybody else; if others starve, all the better, the more I will get for my grain. If I have a job as a doctor, engineer, teacher, or clerk, I don't give a hang for anybody else. Perhaps if I toady to and please the powers that be I shall keep my job, and even get on in life and become a bourgeois. A Communist cannot have such a psychology and such sentiments.

When the workers and peasants proved that they were able by their own efforts to defend themselves and create a new society, a new Communist training began, a training in fighting the exploiters, a training in forming an alliance with the proletariat against the self-seekers and small owners, against the psychology and habits which say: I seek my own profit and I don't give a hang for anything else.

This is the reply to the question how the young and rising generation should learn Communism.

It can learn Communism only by linking up every step in its studies, training and education with the continuous struggle the proletarians and the toilers are waging against the old exploiting society.

When people talk to us about morality, we say: for the Communist, morality lies entirely in this compact, united discipline and conscious mass struggle against the exploiters. We do not believe in an eternal morality, and we expose all the fables about morality.

Morality serves the purpose of helping human society to rise to a higher level and to get rid of the exploitation of labour.

To achieve this we need the younger generation which began to awaken to conscious life in the midst of the disciplined and desperate struggle against the bourgeoisie. In this struggle it is training genuine Communists, it must subordinate to this struggle and link up with it every step in its studies, education and training.

The training of the Communist youth must not consist of sentimental speeches and moral precepts. This is not training.

When people see how their fathers and mothers live under the yoke of the landlords and capitalists, when they themselves experience the sufferings that befall those who start the struggle against the exploiters, when they see what sacrifices the continuation of this struggle entails in order to defend what has been won, and when they see what frenzied foes the landlords and capitalists are—they are trained in this environment to become Communists.

The basis of Communist morality is the struggle for the consolidation and completion of Communism. That is also the basis of Communist training, education and teaching. That is the reply to the question how Communism should be learnt.

We would not believe in teaching, training and education if they were confined only to the school and were divorced from the storm of life. As long as the workers and peasants are oppressed by the landlords and capitalists, and as long as the schools remain in the hands of the landlords and capitalists, the young generation will remain blind and ignorant.

But our school must impart to the youth the fundamentals of knowledge; it must train them in the ability to work out Communist views independently; it must make educated people of them. At the same time, as long as people attend school, it must make them participants in the struggle for emancipation from the exploiters.

The Young Communist League will justify its name as the League of the young Communist generation when it links up every step in its teaching, training and education with participation in the general struggle of all the toilers against the exploiters. For you know perfectly well that as long as Russia remains the only workers' republic, while the old bourgeois system exists in the rest of the world, we shall be weaker than they, we shall be under the constant menace of a new attack; and that only if we learn to be solid and united shall we win in the further struggle and—having gained strength—become really invincible.

Thus, to be a Communist means that you must organise and unite the whole rising generation and set an example of training and discipline in this struggle. Then you will be

able to start building the edifice of Communist society and bring it to completion.

‘In order to make this clearer to all I will quote an example. We call ourselves Communists.

What is a Communist?

Communist is a Latin word. Communist is derived from the word ‘common’. Communist society is a society in which all things—the land, the factories—are owned in common. Communism means working in common.

Is it possible to work in common if each one works separately on his own plot of land? Work in common cannot be brought about all at once. It does not drop from the skies. It comes by toil and suffering, it is created in the course of struggle. Old books are of no use here; no one will believe them. One’s own living experience is required.

When Kolchak and Denikin advanced from Siberia and the South the peasants were on their side. They did not like Bolshevism because the Bolsheviks took their grain at a fixed price. But when the peasants in Siberia and the Ukraine experienced the rule of Kolchak and Denikin, they realised that they had only one alternative: either to go to the capitalist, and he would at once hand them over into slavery to the landlord; or to follow the worker, who, it is true, did not promise a land flowing with milk and honey, who demanded iron discipline and firmness in an arduous struggle, but who would lead them out of enslavement to the capitalists and landlords.

When even the ignorant peasants realised and saw this from their own experience they became conscious adherents of Communism who had passed through a stern school. It is such experience that must form the basis of all the activities of the Young Communist League.

I have replied to the question what we must learn, what we must take from the old school and from the old science. I will now try to answer the question how this must be learnt. The answer is: only by inseparably linking every step in the activities of the school, every step in training, education and teaching, with the struggle of all the toilers against the exploiters.

I will quote a few examples from the experience of the work of some of the youth organisations to illustrate how this training in Communism should proceed.

Everybody is talking about abolishing illiteracy. You know that a Communist society cannot be built in an illiterate country. It is not enough for the Soviet Government to issue an order, or for the Party to issue a particular slogan, or to assign a certain number of the best workers to this work. The younger generation itself must take up this work.

Communism consists in the youth, the young men and women who belong to the Youth League, saying: This is our job; we shall unite and go into the rural districts to abolish illiteracy, so that there shall be no illiterates among our rising generation. We are trying to get the rising generation to devote its activities to this work.

You know that it will not be possible to transform ignorant, illiterate Russia into a literate country quickly. But if the Youth League sets to work on this job, if all the young people work for the benefit of all, the League, which has a membership of 400,000 young men and women, will be entitled to call itself a Young Communist League. Another task of the League is, after having acquired any particular knowledge, to help those young people who cannot liberate themselves from the darkness of illiteracy by their own efforts.

Being a member of the Youth League means devoting one's labour and efforts to the common cause. That is what Communist training means. Only in the course of such work does a young man or woman become a real Communist. Only in this way, only if they achieve practical results in this work, will they become Communists.

Take, for example, work on the suburban vegetable gardens. This is one of the duties of the Young Communist League. The people are starving; there is starvation in the mills and factories. In order to save ourselves from starvation, vegetable gardens must be developed. But agriculture is being carried on in the old way.

Therefore, more class-conscious elements should undertake this work, and you would then find that the number of vegetable gardens would increase, their area grow, and the results improve. The Young Communist League should take an active part in this work. Every League and every branch of the League should regard this as its job.

The Young Communist League should be a shock group, helping in every job and displaying initiative and enterprise. The League should be such that any worker may see that it consists of people whose doctrines he may not understand, whose doctrines he, perhaps, may not immediately believe, but whose practical work and activity prove to him that they are really the people who are showing him the right road.

If the Young Communist League fails to organise its work in this way in all fields, it will show that it is slipping into the old bourgeois road.

We must combine our training with the struggle of the toilers against the exploiters in order to help the former to perform the tasks that follow from the doctrines of Communism.

The members of the League should spend every spare hour in improving the vegetable gardens, or in organising the education of young people in some mill or factory, and so forth.

We want to transform Russia from a poverty-stricken and wretched country into a wealthy country. And the Young Communist League must combine its education, teaching and training with the labour of the workers and peasants, so as not to shut itself up in its schools and confine itself to reading Communist books and pamphlets.

Only by working side by side with the workers and peasants can one become a genuine Communist.

And everyone must be made to see that all those who belong to the Youth League are literate and at the same time know how to work. When everyone sees that we have driven the old drill methods from the old school and have replaced them by conscious discipline, that all young men and women are taking part in subjects, that they are utilising every suburban farm to help the population—the people will cease to look upon labour as they looked upon it before.

It is the task of the Young Communist League to organise assistance in village and city block in such a matter as—I take a small example—cleanliness and the distribution of food.

How was this done in the old capitalist society?

Everybody worked for himself alone, and nobody cared whether there were aged or sick, or whether all the housework fell on the shoulders of the women, who, as a result, were in a condition of oppression and slavery. Whose business is it to combat this? It is the business of the Youth League, which must say: We shall change all this; we shall organise detachments of young people who will help to maintain cleanliness or to distribute food, who will make systematic house-to-house inspections, who will work in an organised way for the benefit of the whole of society, properly distributing their forces and demonstrating that labour must be organised labour.

The generation which is now about fifty years old cannot expect to see the Communist society. This generation will die out before then.

But the generation which is now fifteen years old will see the Communist society, and will itself build this society.

And it must realise that the whole purpose of its life is to build this society.

In the old society work was carried on by separate families, and nobody united their labour except the landlords and capitalists, who oppressed the masses of the people. We must organise all labour, no matter how dirty and arduous it may be, in such a way that every worker and peasant may say: I am part of the great army of free labour, and I can build up

my life without the landlords and capitalists, I can establish the Communist system.

The Young Communist League must train everybody to conscious and disciplined labour while they are still young, from the age of twelve.

That is what will enable us to count on the problems that are now confronting us being solved.

We must reckon that not less than ten years will be required for the electrification of the country, so that our impoverished land may be served by the latest achievements of technology.

And so, the generation which is now fifteen years old, and which in ten or twenty years' time will be living in Communist society, must arrange all their educational tasks in such a way that every day, in every village and in every city, the young people shall engage in the practical solution of some problem of common labour, even though the smallest, even though the simplest.

To the extent that this is done in every village, to the extent that Communist competition develops, to the extent that the youth prove that they can unite their labour, to that extent will the success of Communist construction be ensured.

Only by regarding every step one takes from the standpoint of the success of this construction, only by asking ourselves whether we have done all we can to be united, conscious toilers, only in this long process will the Young Communist League succeed in uniting its half a million members into a single army of labour and win universal respect.

A Speech delivered at the Third All-Russian Congress of the Russian Young Communist League, October 2nd, 1920. (Selected Works. Vol. IX, pp. 467-83. English Edition.)

II

J. STALIN

CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN THE YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE

I must first of all say something about the position which the Central Committee of the youth adopted towards the Party discussion. The mistake was that the Central Committee of the Russian Young Communist League continued to maintain a stubborn silence after the localities had already expressed their opinion. But it would be wrong to attribute the silence of the Central Committee of the League to neutrality. It was simply being over-cautious.

Now a few words about the discussion at the Conference. I consider that there are no differences in principle among you. I scrutinised your theses and articles through a magnifying glass, yet did not find any differences in principle. But on the other hand there is confusion and a heap of artificial irreconcilable contradictions.

The first contradiction is the drawing of a contrast between the League as a 'reserve' of the Party and the League as an 'instrument' of the Party. What is the League: a reserve or an instrument? Both. That is clear, and in fact this was said in the speeches of the comrades themselves. The Young Communist League is a reserve, a reserve of peasants and workers, from which the Party draws reinforcements. But it is at the same time an instrument, an instrument in the hands of the Party, which exercises sway over the masses of the youth. It might be said more concretely that the League is an instrument of the Party, an auxiliary instrument of the Party in the sense that the active membership of the Young Communist League is an instrument whereby the Party influences the youth outside the League. These concepts do not contradict each other and cannot be contrasted one with another.

The second supposedly irreconcilable contradiction is that, in the opinion of certain comrades, 'the class policy of the League is determined not by its membership composition but by the consistency of the people who stand at its head'. Con-

sistency is contrasted with membership composition. This contradiction is also artificial, for the class policy of the Russian Young Communist League is determined by both—by its membership composition and by the consistency of its leadership. If consistent people are subjected to the hourly influence of a membership composition of the League that is alien in spirit, and the members of the League enjoy equal rights, such a composition is bound to leave its traces on the work and policy of the League. Why does the Party regulate its composition? Because it knows that its composition influences its work.

There is, finally, one more contradiction—also an artificial one—concerning the role of the League and of its work among the peasants. Some claim that it is the purpose of the League to 'consolidate' its influence among the peasants, but not to extend it, while others want to 'extend the influence' but are not willing to consolidate it. It is desired to build a platform in the discussion on this basis. It is clear that the contrast between these two aims is an artificial one, for we all very well know that the League must simultaneously consolidate and extend its influence in the countryside. True, in one passage of the theses of the Central Committee of the Russian Young Communist League there is an awkward phrase about work among the peasants. But neither Comrade Tarkhanov nor the other representatives of the majority of the Central Committee of the Russian Young Communist League insist on this awkward phrase and are willing to amend it. After this, is it worth quarrelling over trifles?

But there is one contradiction in the life and activity of the Young Communist League, a real contradiction and not an artificial one, about which I would like to say a few words. I am referring to the existence of two trends within the League: the working class trend and the peasant trend. I am referring to the contradiction between these trends which makes itself felt and which cannot be ignored. The question of this contradiction constitutes the weakest point in the utterances of the speakers. Everybody says that expansion must proceed along the line of enlisting workers into the League, but everybody stumbles when passing to the peasantry, to the question of enlisting the peasantry. Even those speakers who were unaffected and straightforward stumbled over this question.

It is evident that the Russian Young Communist League is confronted by two problems: the problem of the workers and the problem of the peasants. It is evident that inasmuch as the Young Communist League is a workers' and peasants' League, these two trends, these contradictions within the League, will continue to exist in the future. Some will say

that workers should be enlisted, and keep silent about the peasants, while others will say that peasants should be enlisted, and underrate the importance of the proletarian element in the League as the leading element. This intrinsic contradiction, which is inherent in the very nature of the League, causes the speakers to stumble. A parallel was drawn in the speeches between the Party and the Young Communist League. But the fact of the matter is that no such parallel exists in reality, for our Party is a workers' and not a workers' and peasants' party, while the Young Communist League is a workers' and peasants' League. That is why the Young Communist League cannot be only a workers' League, but must be at one and the same time a workers' League and a peasants' League. One thing is clear, namely, that with the present structure of the League internal contradictions and the conflict of trends will be inevitable in the future too.

Those are right who say that the middle-peasant youth must be drawn into the Party ; but one must be cautious here and not err into the position into which even some responsible workers sometimes stray, of advocating a workers' and peasants' party. Many people raised an outcry and said : 'You are enlisting workers, why not enlist peasants into the Party to the same degree ? Let us enrol one hundred or two hundred thousand peasants'. The Central Committee is opposed to this, because our Party must be a workers' Party. About seventy or eighty per cent workers and twenty or twenty-five per cent non-workers—that is approximately what the ratio within the Party should be. But the case of the Young Communist League is rather different from that of the Party. The Young Communist League is a free and unrestricted organisation of the revolutionary elements among the worker and peasant youth.

Without peasants, without a mass of peasant youth, it will cease to be a workers' and peasants' League. But at the same time we must see to it that the proletarian element continues to play the leading part.

Speech delivered at a Conference on Work among the Youth. April 5, 1924.

PROLETARIAN STUDENTS

YOUR representatives have requested me to set forth my views on the tasks of the Party and Party work among the proletarian students.

Allow me to say a few words on this subject. The feature of the situation at the present moment is that the proletariat

of our country has succeeded in creating the conditions required for socialist construction. It is untrue to say that socialism cannot be built in one country, in a country which has defeated and ejected the capitalists and landlords. A country which has a dictatorship of the proletariat, which possesses vast resources and which enjoys the support of the proletarians of all countries, can build socialism, and must build socialism. Lenin was right when he said that our country has every requisite 'for the building of a complete socialist society'. The feature of the present moment is that we have already succeeded in making important strides in the building of socialism, having transformed socialism from a painted ikon into a prosaic object of everyday practical work.

What must be the role of the proletarian students in this constructive work?

Their role is undoubtedly one of importance if not of prime importance. The universities, communist universities, workers' universities preparatory courses and professional schools are schools for the training of a commanding staff in economic and culture affairs. Medical men and economists, co-operators and teachers, mining engineers and statisticians, technicians and chemists, agricultural scientists and railway engineers, veterinary surgeons and forestry experts, electricians and mechanics—these are all future commanders in the work of building a new society, in the work of building a socialist economy and a socialist culture. The new society cannot be built without a new commanding staff, just as a new army cannot be built without a new commanding staff. The advantage of the new commanding staff is that it is called upon to build not for the exploitation of the working people in the interests of a handful of rich men, but for the emancipation of the working people, and against the handful of exploiters. The whole point is that the university students—workers and peasants, Party people and non-Party people—should realise this honourable role and begin to fulfil it conscientiously and scrupulously.

And so the first task of the Party is to see to it that the proletarian students become conscientious builders of a socialist economy and a socialist culture.

But the new society cannot be built only by the commanding staff, without the direct support of the working masses. The knowledge possessed by the new commanding staff is not enough for the building of socialism. This requires that, in addition, the working masses should trust and support this commanding staff. The distinguishing feature of the old commanding staff, which operated under capitalism, was that it shunned the workers and peasants, set itself up above the

working masses and did not value either the confidence or support of these masses, with the result that it did not enjoy either. 'This way is absolutely unsuitable for our country. The new commanding staff for the building of a new economy and a new culture is called new just because it must discard the old methods of commanding definitely and for good. The new methods of administration of the new commanding staff consist not in holding aloof from the masses but in maintaining the closest ties with them ; not in setting themselves up above the masses but in marching at the head of the masses and leading them ; not in shunning the masses but in mingling with them and winning their confidence and support. Socialist construction is unthinkable in any other way.

And so, the second task of the Party is to see to it that the proletarian students regard themselves as an inseparable part of the working masses and that the students should feel that they are public workers and should behave like genuine public workers.

Finally, a word about the Communist students in particular. It is said that the Communist students make little progress in their studies. It is said that they are seriously lagging behind the non-Party students in this respect. It is said that the Communist students prefer to engage in 'high politics' and waste two-thirds of their time on the endless discussion of 'world problems'. Is this true? I think it is. But if it is true, then at least two conclusions must be drawn. Firstly, the Communist students are running the risk of becoming bad leaders of socialist construction, for it is impossible to lead the building of a socialist society without having mastered the sciences. Secondly, the work of training the new commanding staff runs the risk of becoming the monopoly of the old professors, who need new successors in the shape of new people, for it is impossible to create new successors and new scientific workers out of people who refuse or are unable to master science. It need hardly be said that all this is bound to create a direct menace to the whole work of socialist construction.

Can we reconcile ourselves to such a state of affairs? Obviously, we cannot. And, therefore, the Communist students and the Soviet students in general must clearly and definitely set themselves an immediate task, namely, to master science and to create new successors for the old professorial staff consisting of new, Soviet people. I do not mean by this that students should not engage in politics. Not at all. All I mean is that Communist students must know how to combine political work with the work of mastering science. It is said that this combination is a difficult one. That is, of course, true. But

since when have Communists begun to fear difficulties? Difficulties lie in the way of our construction work just in order to be combated and overcome. Furthermore, one other circumstance must be borne in mind. I think that our country, with its revolutionary habits and traditions and with its struggle against inertia and mental stagnation, offers the most favourable field for the flourishing growth of science. It can scarcely be doubted that the philistine narrow-mindedness and routine characteristic of the old professors of the capitalist school are deadweights on science. It can scarcely be doubted that only new people, people exempt from these shortcomings, are capable of full and free scientific creative work. In this respect our country has a great future before it as the citadel and nursery of the sciences liberated from all fetters. I think we are already entering on this road. But it would be a deplorable and unseemly thing if our Communist students were to stand aloof from the high road of scientific development. That is why the slogan of mastering science assumes particular importance.

And so, the third task of the Party is to see to it that the proletarian students, and the Communist students above all, realise the necessity of mastering science and do master science.

A Letter to the First All-Union Conference of Proletarian Students, April 15, 1925.

THE TASKS OF THE YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE

I

What, in the main, are the duties imposed upon the Young Communist League by the present international and internal position of the Soviet Union?

The question is put in too general a form, and therefore the answer, too, can only be a general one. The present international and internal position of the Soviet Union in the main imposes upon the Young Communist League the duty of supporting by word and by deed the revolutionary movement of the oppressed classes of all countries and the struggle of the proletariat of the Soviet Union for the building of socialism and the freedom and independence of the proletarian state. But it follows from this that the Young Communist League will be able to fulfil this general task only if it is guided in all its work by the guiding instructions issued by the Communist International and the Communist Party of Russia.

II

What tasks confront the Young Communist League in connection with the dangers of liquidationism (the loss of the perspective of socialist construction), nationalism (the loss of the International revolutionary perspective) and the belittling of the Party leadership—that is, in connection with those dangers to which attention was drawn in the pamphlet Questions and Answers?

Briefly speaking, the task of the Young Communist League in this sphere is to educate our worker and peasant youth in the spirit of Leninism. And what does educating the youth in the spirit of Leninism mean? It means, in the first place, getting them to realise that the victory of socialist construction in our country is possible and essential. It means, in the second place, strengthening their conviction that our workers' state is the offspring of the international proletariat; that it is the base for the development of the revolution in all countries; that the complete victory of our revolution is the cause of the international proletariat. It means, in the third place, training in the youth a spirit of confidence in the leadership of the Russian Communist Party. It is necessary to create in the Young Communist League such cadres and such active forces as will be able to educate the youth precisely along these lines.

Young Communist Leaguers are active in all fields of development: in industry, in agriculture, in the co-operatives, in the soviet, in cultural and educational organisations, etc. Every active Young Communist Leaguer must connect his daily work in all fields of development with the perspective of building Socialist society. He must be able to carry on his daily work in the spirit and in the direction of realising this perspective.

Young Communist Leaguers carry on work among workers and peasants of the most varied nationalities. The Young Communist League is itself a sort of International in its way. An important factor in this respect is not only the national composition of the League, but also the fact that the Young Communist League is directly associated with the Russian Communist Party, which is one of the most important sections of the world proletarian International. Internationalism is a fundamental idea permeating the activity of the Young Communist League. Therein lies its strength. Therein lies its might. The spirit of internationalism must always hover over the Young Communist League. The successes and failures in the struggle of the proletariat of our country must be associated

in the minds of the Young Communist Leaguers with the successes and failures of the international revolutionary movement. The Young Communist Leaguers must learn to regard our revolution not as an end in itself, but as a means and an aid towards the victory of the proletarian revolution in all countries.

Formally speaking, the Young Communist League is a non-Party organisation. But it is at the same time a communist organisation. This means that the Young Communist League, while it is formally a non-Party organisation of workers and peasants, must, at the same time, work under the guidance of the Party. The task is to ensure that the youth have confidence in our Party, to ensure that the Young Communist League is guided by our Party. The Young Communist Leaguer must remember that the principal and most important thing is to ensure the guidance of the Party in all the work of the Young Communist League. The Young Communist Leaguer must remember that without such guidance the Young Communist League will be unable to perform its fundamental task, namely, to educate the worker and peasant youth in the spirit of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of Communism.

III

How should we regard the question of the growth of the Young Communist League at the present time? Should we, in the main, continue the policy of enlisting in our ranks all young workers, young agricultural labourers, young poor peasants, and the best of the young middle peasants; or should we devote our main attention to consolidating and educating the youth masses already enrolled in the League?

You must not put it: either—or. Both must be done. As far as possible, all young workers and the best elements among the poor peasants and the middle peasants must be enlisted in the Young Communist League. But at the same time, the active forces of the League must devote their attention to educating and assimilating the new members of the Young Communist League. Strengthening its proletarian core is a most important and urgent task of the Young Communist League. If this task is accomplished it will be a guarantee that the Young Communist League will follow the right path. But the Young Communist League is not an organisation of young workers alone. It is an organisation of young workers and young peasants. Hence, simultaneously with strengthening the proletarian core, you must work to enlist the best elements among the peasant youth and to ensure a firm alliance

between the proletarian core and the peasant section of the Young Communist League. In default of this, the leadership of the young peasants by the proletarian core within the League will be impossible.

IV

Some of the gubernia committees of the Young Communist League, citing the example of the women's delegate meetings, have begun to organise non-Party peasant youth delegate meetings consisting of permanent delegates. The function of these meetings is to unite the active elements among the young peasants, primarily young middle peasants, under the leadership of the League. Is this position correct? Does it not involve the danger that these delegate meetings may degenerate into something in the nature of non-Party peasant youth leagues, which might set themselves up against our Young Communist League?

In my opinion, this position is an incorrect one. Why? For the following reasons.

Firstly, because it conceals a sort of dread of the middle peasants, a desire to keep the young middle peasants at a distance, an attempt to wash one's hands of them. Is this desire a proper one? Of course not. We must not keep the young middle peasants at a distance, but must bring them closer to us, closer to the Young Communist League. Only in this way will it be possible to inspire the young middle peasants with confidence in the workers, confidence in the proletarian core of the Young Communist League, confidence in our Party.

Secondly, there can be no doubt that under present conditions, when a revival is to be observed among all groups of the peasantry, separate delegate meetings of young middle peasants held under the aegis of the Young Communist League would inevitably become transformed into a separate middle peasant youth league. Moreover, this separate league would necessarily be obliged to set itself up against the existing youth league and its leader—the Russian Communist Party; it would attract the peasant section away from the Young Communist League and thus create the danger of a division of the Young Communist League into two leagues—into a league of young workers and a league of young peasants. Can we afford to ignore this danger? Of course, we cannot. Do we need such a division, especially at the present juncture, especially under the present conditions of our development? Of course not. On the contrary, what we need today is not

to keep the young peasants at a distance from the proletarian core of the Young Communist League, but to bring them closer to it; not discord, but a firm alliance between them.

Thirdly, the formation of delegate meetings of young middle peasants cannot be justified on the ground that there are delegate meetings of working women and peasant women. You cannot lump together young workers and peasants, who have their separate organisation in the shape of the Young Communist League, and working women and peasant women, who have no separate organisation of their own; just as you must not confuse the middle peasant youth with working women, who form a part of the *working class*. Delegate meetings of young middle peasants create a danger to the Young Communist League, whereas delegate meetings of working women and peasant women create no danger to anybody, because at the present time the working women and peasant women have no separate permanent organisation of their own similar to the Young Communist League.

That is why I think it superfluous to create special delegate meetings of young middle peasants under the aegis of the Young Communist League.

I think that the Sixth Congress of the Young Communist League acted rightly in confining itself to the proposal to create auxiliary organisations in the rural districts around the Young Communist League, such as educational circles, agricultural study groups and the like.

Is it possible under our conditions for the active body of the Young Communist League to combine practical work with a thorough study of Marxism and Leninism, and what ought the Young Communist organisations and individual Young Communist Leaguers to do in this respect?

Firstly, a few words about Marxism and Leninism. Put in the way it is, one might think that Marxism is one thing and Leninism another, that one can be a Leninist without being a Marxist. But this idea cannot be regarded as correct. Leninism is not Lenin's teaching *minus* Marxism. Leninism is Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolutions. In other words, Leninism includes all that Marx taught plus Lenin's new contribution to the treasure store of Marxism, which necessarily follows from all that Marx taught (the doctrine of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the peasant question, the national question, the Party, the question of the social roots of reformism, the question of the chief deviations from Communism, etc.). It would therefore be better to put it in such a way as to speak of Marxism or of Leninism (which are fundamentally one and the same thing), and not of Marxism and Leninism.

Secondly, there can be no doubt that unless the active members of the Young Communist League combine practical work with theoretical training ('study of Leninism'), there can be no intelligent Communist work of any kind within the Young Communist League. Leninism is the generalisation of the experience of the revolutionary movement of the workers of all countries. This experience is the guiding star which lights up the path of all practical workers in their daily activities and which gives them their direction. Practical workers can neither feel assurance in their work nor be certain that their work is right if they have not mastered this experience to a minimum degree at least. It will be the fate of practical workers to grope blindly, to work in the dark, if they do not study Leninism, if they do not strive to master Leninism, if they have no desire to combine their practical work with the necessary theoretical training. That is why a study of Leninism, a Leninist education, is a most essential condition for the transformation of the present active body of the Young Communist League into an active body of genuine Leninists able to train the millions of Young Communist Leaguers in the spirit of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of Communism.

But is such a combination of theory and practice possible under present conditions, when the active members of the Young Communist League are overloaded with work? Yes, it is possible. It is difficult, that cannot be denied. But it is quite possible, seeing that it is so essential, and seeing that without this condition it will be impossible to create an active body of genuine Leninists in the Young Communist League. We must not be like weaklings who flee from difficulties and look for an easy job. Difficulties exist to be tackled and overcome. The Bolsheviks would certainly have perished in their struggle against capitalism if they had not learned to overcome difficulties. The Young Communist League would not be the Young Communist League if it feared difficulties. The active body of the Young Communist League has undertaken a great task. It must therefore summon up its strength to overcome each and every difficulty standing in the path to its goal.

Patient and persistent Leninist study—that is the path the active body of the Young Communist League must pursue if it really wants to train the millions of young people in the spirit of the proletarian revolution.

An Article in PRAVDA on the seventh Anniversary of the Russian Y. C. L. October 29, 1925.

